

A NEW WEED INTRODUCTION IN NEW ENGLAND, *ATRIPLEX SIBIRICA*. — Some years ago Prof. Burton N. Gates sent me a plant for identification that was not included in the eighth edition of Gray's Manual. It was an Old World type of *Atriplex*, and so I sent it to Prof. Paul Aellen, of Basel, Switzerland, the chief authority on the Chenopodiaceae. Aellen identified the specimen as *Obione muricata* Gaertn., a native of Siberia and Turkestan.

The status of *Obione* Gaertn. as a genus distinct from *Atriplex* L. is still debatable and perhaps a matter of individual preference. Ulbrich, in the second edition of Engler and Prantl's *Die Natürlichen Pflanzenfamilien* (vol. 16c, 1934) recognized it, and Aellen follows him, although with some reservations. The chief, and perhaps only, character is in the fruiting pistillate perianth segments being united to above the middle or throughout, rather than nearly free as in typical *Atriplex* species such as *A. patula* L., *A. hortensis* L., and *A. rosea* L. There are two "*Obione*" species that occur within the Gray's Manual range, viz. *A. argentea* and *A. arenaria* Nutt. From these *Atriplex sibirica* L. (*Obione muricata* Gaertn.) differs in having the fruiting perianth segments united to the apex and strongly spiny on the back throughout. Since the perianth is incurved at the apex, the mature fruit is almost completely enclosed except for a minute apical tube.

The following description is translated from Aellen's description in his paper "Die orientalischen *Obione*-Arten" (*Verhandl. Naturforsch. Gesell. Basel* 49: 131-137. 1937-38).

Atriplex sibirica L. *Sp. Pl.* ed. 2, 1493. 1763.

Obione muricata Gaertn. *Fruct.* 2: 198, *t.* 126, *f.* 5, 1791.

Obione sibirica (L.) Fisch. *Cat. Hort. Gorenk.* 25. 1808.

Annual, up to 60 cm. high, many-branched, with elongate, glabrate branches; middle leaves mostly alternate, oval-deltoid, up to 7 cm. long (including the petiole 1 cm. long), and 3 cm. wide, with simple or double lobe-like teeth below the middle, above the middle with sinuately curved teeth, the apex more or less acute, the base rounded, slightly

decurrent into the petiole, beneath with prominent nerves, gray-pulverulent, above glabrescent; smaller leaves lanceolate, more or less entire; male flowers very few in balls at the end of branchlets; pistillate perianth up to 6 mm. long (including the pedicel), up to 4 mm. broad, stellate-scaly when young, the lower part round, connate upwardly to a small opening, woody in fruit, irregularly tuberculate and echinate, with a pedicel 2-3 mm. long, ca. 1 mm. thick at the upper end, inconspicuously ridged from the decurrent nerves; pericarp membranous, more or less adherent; seed entirely enclosed within the woody perianth segments, ca. 2 mm. in diameter, red-brown, with upwardly turned radicle and 2 small separated styles.

Specimen examined: Dump of Queensbury Combing Company, Auburn, Worcester County, Massachusetts, July 16, 1949, *Burton N. Gates* 31888 (US), Clark Univ., New England Bot. Club, (GH).

It will be interesting to find out if this plant persists. Since it grows naturally in a cold region, it may very well find New England a congenial habitat.

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